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By CONGRESSMAN KEN HEOFILER

The nation's capital in 1887 had an air of hopefulness. The new extensions of the Capitol Building had just been completed. The old dome, a fire hazard, had been torn down. But the House of Representatives made ready to move from its old chamber in what is now Statuary Hall into the new south wing.

In those days, Congress convened in December, and it was en Monday, Dec. 7, 1857, that Albert Gallatin Jenkins took the eath of office as a member of the House of Representatives. This was the 35th Congress, and he found as his colleagues 128 Democrats, 92 Republicans and 14 members of the Native American (Know Nothing) Party.

Congressman Jenkins' first act after being sworn in was to cast his ballot for James L. Orr of South Carolina who was elected Speaker of the House with exactly the same number of votes as there were Democrais. For about a week, the House of Representatives met for the last times in what is now called "Statury Hall." Congressman Jenkins had the honor to serve in the chamber where ex-President John Quincy Adams, as a Congressman, had fallen dead at his deak, nine years before; while answering a roll call.

Jenkins' Desk No. 172

On Dec. 16, 1857, at 12 noon, the House of Representatives met for the first time in history in its present quarters in the south wing of the Capitol Building. Thus Congressman Jenkins was present for a history-making event. Unlike today, the Members of the House each had a desk (as does the Senate.). As a freshmen member, Jenkins sat toward the rear at Desk No. 172.

When he first arrived in Washington, young Jenkins lived at Crutchet's Boarding, House, located at 477 Sixth St., at the corper of D St. Before the time of lights only and submitted biles, carriages had a great deal of difficulty negotiating the

m u d d y and uspeved streets.
But he was reasonably close to
the Capitol, and g e n e r a l l y
walled to and from the boarding bouse.

It was a strange life at first for the young politician. Idelisted by the ladies, nevertheless he was lonely for a deeper form of companionship. In the social whirl of Washington, Congressman Jenkins also folt a strong need of a belpmate. He resolved that after Congress had adjourned he would get married. His choice came as no surprise to his western Virginia friends who knew of his many trips to St. Louis, outonaibly to visit his brother, Dr. William A. Jenkins, but really designed to see Miss Virginia Southard Bowlin, the daughter of a St. Louis judge and Congressman who later served as American ambassador to several nations.

In his first session in Congress, Jenkins buckled down immediately to work. He was assigned to one "major" committee—the Committee on the Militia; and one "minor" committee — the Select Committee to Inquire into the Accounts and Official Conduct of the Late Doorkeeper of the House, It was the latter committee which gave Congressman Jenkins his first opportunity to address the House of Representatives.

Makes First Speech

It has long been customary for younger members to get their feet on the ground and acquire some seniority before they speak up in debate. But the Congressman representing Cabell County, who had just

celebrated his 27th birthday a few days before the convening of Congress, startled his colleagues on Feb. 5, 1858, by rising to his feet with the adept parliamentary opening: "I rise to a privileged question." Congressman Jenkins attempted to gain

the floor in order to present a report of his committee on the doorkeeper, and although unsuccessful, his celleagues marked him as a man with a thorough knowledge of parliamentary law. Four days later, Jenkins successfully brought the resolution before the House.

On March 20, less than four months after taking office, Congressmen Jenkins engaged in a filter bang debalg with Chin's Congressman Edward Wade over the admission of Kimsas to

the Unite: Sharply and wittly be matched arguments with Wade, and at one point brought loud laughter when, after Wade hed delivered a somewhat complex answer to Jenkine's question, Jenkins responded:

"That is a regular Yankon an-

Opportunity for Fame

E But the real opportunity for national fame came to Jenkins on May 4, 1858, when the lasue of admission of Minnesota came up for debate. Congressman John Shorman of Ohio, author of the Sherman Anti-trust Act in later years, opposed admission of Minnesota because that territory had several clauses in its constitution which Sherman disliked, with reference to election of their members of the state legislature. Although Minnesota was a free territory and would swing the balance against the slave states, Jenkins believed so strongly in the doctrine of states rights that he rose to riddle Sherman's arguments. He talked forcefully and extemporaneously, opening in this way:

"Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to address the House on this subject, and I should not have taken the floor for that purpose now, if it had not been for the remarkable course of argument pursued by the gentleman from Ohio. I have taken hurried notes of what he said, and will reply to his positions in the order in which he presented them."

17 July 1961

Step by step, Jenkins demolished Sherman's position, concluding with this statement:

"I am in favor of the admission of Minnesota into this Union. She comes here with a constitution formed by a legallyelected convention, fairly and legitimately elected by the people, and with the voice of the people potential in its favor. ; .I trust that the act of admitting her will be consummated at once, thereby bringing another star within our political system, the grandour of whose structure, the beauty of whose prin. postions, and the harmony of whose movements, will be t Fe admiration of succeeding ages."

Support Big Help

Jenkins's support was a major factor in the admission of Minnesota to the Union.

Congressman Jenkins's successful battle to admit Minnesota received nation - wide attention. The Boston Statesman commented; "If there ever was a man uned up it was the Republican I e a der Sherman of Ohio by Mr. Jenkins of Virginia."

The Kanawha Valley Star, after printing the full text of the Congressmen's remarks on the front page of its issue of June 1, 1888, had this to say:

"We this week lay before our readers the maiden speech of our Representative in Congress. If reflects great credit upon him, and has deservedly received the encomiums of the press throughout the Union, both North and South. His remarks were received with approbation by his associates in Congress, elicited their warmest praise, and cannot but meet with the cordial approval of his constituents."

With a highly successful record established in his first session of Congress, Representative Jenkins headed westwardnot for Greenbottom and the Ohio River, but for St. Louis, Mo.

He had an important date with a girl named Virginia.

(To Be Continued)